GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6287
ANSWERED ON:06.05.2013
DECLINE IN NUMBER OF SEA COW .
Muttemwar Shri Vilas Baburao;Sharma Shri Jagdish

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the population of marine mammal also known as 'Sea-cow' is declining in the coastal areas of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Andaman and Nicobar Islands;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the said marine mammals have been listed as endangered species in the Red List of International Union for Conservation of Nature;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to protect the said mammals?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a),(b), (c)&(d) As per the survey conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun in 2012-13, the population of Dugong (sea-cow) in the country is declining in two regions, viz., Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. However, dugong population in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is stable. The decline in population of dugong is due to unscientific fishing methodology, pollution, habitat degradation, hunting etc.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has declared the dugong population across the world as 'Vulnerable'.

(e) The steps taken by the Government to protect the habitats of wild animals including marine animals in the country are as follows:

i. Dugong has been identified as one of the 16 selected species for initiating recovery programmes in their respective habitats under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats`. Financial and technical assistance is provided to the Union Territory Government of Andaman & Nicobar Islands under the component 'Recovery of Critically Endangered Species'.

ii. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. According to the conservation and threat status, wild animals are placed in different schedules of the Act. Dugongs are included in Schedule I of the Act, which affords it the highest degree of protection under the Act.

iii. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, provides for punishment of offences for violation of its provisions. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s).

iv. Protected Areas, viz., National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitats.

v. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to strengthen the enforcement of law for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

vi. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

vii. The State/Union Territory Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around the Protected Areas.

viii. Strict vigil is maintained by the officials of State Departments of Forests and Wildlife.